

Songsmith – Austin  
September Critique Session  
September 18, 2023

The Songsmith – Austin September Critique Session was held via Zoom from 7:10 to 9:13 pm on September 18, 2023. We had eight Zoom attendees and heard eight awesome songs in various stages of creation. Two attendees completed the optional movie song challenge. We hissed often (thank you, GrAmy) and we learned a lot of cool stuff about polycarbonates - and that at least four of us have a polycarbonate business background. Amazing!

Greg Livingston and Amy Guentzel (GrAmy) provided another episode of their rock opera with a song entitled “Angel’s Wings”. This possibly stand-alone guitar song described Estrella being tempted by the evil Rastaban (with hissing “s” sounds). Comments included a few production and lyric suggestions. On a roll, y’all!

Stewart Moser completed the optional movie song challenge with “Doria”, a striking adaptation of the movie “The Picture Of Dorian Gray”. Very well done, Stewart’s use of polytonal melody and chords added depth to the song’s eeriness. The group provided a few very minor lyrical possibilities to consider. Great work, Stewart!

Kevin Mallory sent his song “Between My Fingers”, another cool metal-inspired tune about the singer realizing missed opportune ties in life. Spectacular chorus and very thought-provoking, listeners provided a few minor lyrical suggestions to make this song even stronger. Really enjoyed this one, Kevin - thanks!

Mary Dawson sent her song “Blessed Hope” co-written with Bruce Greer and sung by the amazing Guy Penrod, describing the singer’s love for Christ. This Easter-based Christian song had amazing production and comments included a slight modification to the chorus for title repetition. Super, Mary - thanks!

Joe Strouse provided his movie song “Cold Cherry Ice” (after watching “Hot Summer Nights”) describing drug dealing in Cape Cod during the 1990s. While the group enjoyed this first-person song, there were great suggestions for strengthening it even further.

Alex Gax provided his guitar/vocal song “People Rally Like Me”, a wry and touching song about how the singer discovered that fact. Very reminiscent of other singers (including the amazing David Wilcox), Alex did a great job of capturing our minds and hearts. Suggestion included a few minor lyrical possibilities. Outstanding work, Alex!

Our intrepid moderator, Chris Meyer, provided his industrial hip hop “Polycarbonate 70th Birthday Song” describing the history of this wonder material. As is common in hip hop and rap songs, the rhythm of the lyrics is important - which Chris followed well. Suggestions included a few things to keep it listenable. You get a raise, Chris - thanks!

Chris Cavello completed the session with his song “BOB”, a very funny ditty about a boyfriend being rejected by his girlfriend, *a la* John Price and Iris Dement. Chris’ storytelling and motion worked well and there were several very minor lyrical comments to make it flow even better. Great work, Chris - thanks!

Joe briefly described a simple 10-minute exercise for making descriptions stronger and helping a writer get out of the “box” by setting up two columns of 5-10 adjectives and pairing them with 5-10 nouns. Specifically, the first adjective is paired with each noun, then the second adjective is paired with each noun, etc.. until the lists are exhausted. Joe also described other pairings (verb-noun, adjective-verb, and others) to help stimulate the songwriting imagination.

Songsmith meets three out of the four Monday nights each month. As always, Songsmith has a Salado meeting (2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of each month), the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday for the Austin meeting, and a DFW meeting (4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each month) where your songs can be heard and you can get feedback - always free – no dues or other financial obligations.

As always, we’re looking for Zoom-knowledgeable maven to run the audio and visual portions for the DFW and Salado meetings. If you’re interested, please contact Mary Dawson at [Mary@MaryDawson.com](mailto:Mary@MaryDawson.com).

We hope to see you on Monday, October 16th or sooner!